

CLEAN VERSION OF AMENDED CLAIMS:

1. (Amended) A method of automatically determining a peak level of a signal propagated on a carrier medium, the method including:
 - detecting a traversal of a noise threshold level, determined relative to a noise signal, by a data signal;
 - determining whether the data signal traverses a peak level within a predetermined time interval after the detection of the traversal of the noise threshold level; and
 - varying the peak level in accordance with the determination whether the data signal traversed the peak level.
2. (Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein varying includes lowering the peak level in the absence of a traversal of the peak level by the data signal within the predetermined time interval.
3. (Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein varying includes raising the peak level if a traversal of the peak level by the data signal is detected within the predetermined time interval.
4. (Amended) The method of claim 1 including detecting further traversals of the noise threshold level by the data signal, determining whether the data signal traverses the peak level within the predetermined time interval after the detection of each of the traversals of the noise threshold, and varying the peak level by

progressively smaller increments in accordance with the determination as to whether the data signal traverses the peak level within the predetermined time interval.

5. Apparatus for automatically determining a peak level of a signal propagated on a carrier medium, the apparatus including:

a first comparator to detect a traversal of a noise threshold level, determined relative to a noise signal, by a data signal;

a second comparator to detect whether the data signal traverses a peak level within a predetermined time interval after the detection of the traversal of the noise threshold level; and

peak logic to vary the peak level in accordance with the detection of whether the data signal traversed the peak level.

6. The apparatus of claim 5 wherein the peak logic lowers the peak level in the absence of a traversal of the peak level by the data signal within the predetermined time interval.

7. The apparatus of claim 5 wherein the peak logic raises the peak level if a traversal of the peak level by the data signal is detected within the predetermined time interval.

8. The apparatus of claim 5 wherein the first comparator detects further traversals of the noise threshold level by the data signal, the second comparator detects whether the data signal traverses the peak level within the predetermined time interval

after the respective detections of each of the traversals of the noise threshold, and the peak logic varies the peak level by progressively smaller increments in accordance with the detection of whether the data signal traverses the peak level within the predetermined time interval.

9. Apparatus for automatically determining a peak level of a signal propagated on a carrier medium, the apparatus including:

first means for detecting a traversal of a noise threshold level, determined relative to a noise signal, by a data signal;

second means for detecting whether the data signal traverses a peak level within a predetermined time interval after the detection of the traversal of the noise threshold level; and

third means for varying the peak level in accordance with the detection of whether the data signal traversed the peak level.

10. (Amended) A machine-readable medium storing a sequence of instructions that, when executed by a machine, cause the machine to perform:

detecting a traversal of a noise threshold level, determined relative to a noise signal, by a data signal propagated on a carrier medium;

detecting whether the data signal traverses a peak level within a predetermined time interval after the detection of the traversal of the noise threshold level; and

varying the peak level in accordance with the detection whether the data signal traversed the peak level.